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the other hanging their heads in sorrow, as at a great discomfiture of their expectations! Even in the very heart of the British metropolis, "on 'Change" in London, these counter manifestations took place, and produced unhappy incidents. At the rumor of a Russian success in the Crimea, the Greek merchants sometimes failed to conceal their feelings of exultation, and were severely handled for their looks and words.

There is one powerful, invisible, anomalous party to this desolating war, which one would fain hope may be improved by its teachings. That party is composed of the conductors of the leading journals in Great Britain, who aroused that flood-tide of popular passion and prejudice before which the nation drifted into the maelstrom of this catastrophe. The little oligarchy they form is an ambiguous entity, nameless and inaccessible. "Secret Diplomacy" is doubtless an evil; but the British press has added this war to the disastrous evidence it had previously given, that *Secret Editorship* is an evil, a peril ten times worse. The Secret Diplomacy may at last be dragged from the wriggling sinuosities of its course before the tribunal of public opinion, and each individual party implicated be obliged to bear some portion of the responsibility due to his acts. But Secret Editorship is as intangible and invisible as the sightless wind. Autocracy, despotism of the most iron will, is a visible corporosity of flesh and blood, and human fears; and it may be approached and thrown down by an uprising and indignant people, if its heel becomes too heavy. It bears upon its single shoulders all the responsibility of the government of an Empire. But Secret Editorship, while it wields a power as vast for good or evil as any autocracy on earth, is the only moral agency operating upon the destiny of nations, that can shake from its shoulders all responsibility, and walk abroad in the largest license of mischief with complete impunity. It may set a continent on fire, and, like an invisible Nero, fiddle in view of the conflagration. It may see unseen the wound it makes; for its dagger, that saps the life-veins of a million victims, is as viewless to common eyes as the aerial phantom that counterparted Macbeth's murderous knife. If it please Divine Providence to educe some good from this vast calamity; to turn this swooping tempest of human passions and follies to His ultimate praise and to the benefit of mankind; we earnestly hope these results may embrace the downfall of *Secret Editorship*.

E. B.

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## OFFICIAL BROKERAGE:

### OR, THE PURCHASE OF COMMISSIONS IN THE BRITISH ARMY.

The *North British Review*, in 1855, had a very amusing and suggestive account of the way in which offices are bought and sold in the British Army. It is a real trade, a sort of official brokerage, the chief value of which seems to lie in the social and official position it gives; for these commissions are found to cost as much on the average as life-annuities. The whole article of which we present only a sketch, lets us into the interior workings of the war-system in its social bearings in the Old World.

The reviewer deems the service of British Army officers nearly gratuitous, because the cost of a commission by purchasers is greater than the capital cost of an annuity equal in amount to the pay attached to the commission. This he proves by facts like the following:

"An ensign in the line pays \$2,340 for his commission, and receives about

\$1 25 per day, or \$456 a year. A lieutenant pays \$3,420, and receives about \$550 a year. A captain pays \$8,750, and receives \$1,050 a year. A lieutenant-colonel pays \$12,200, and receives \$1,460 a year. Not only are commissions eagerly purchased at these prices, but large premiums on them are frequently offered and paid to induce the holders of them to retire; and these premiums are sometimes as large as 50 or 100 per cent.

For further elucidation of the matter, take the following statements from a speech by Lord Arthur Paget in the House of Commons:—"In the Life Guards, a lieutenant-colonel's commission and outfit cost \$38,250, which would purchase an annuity of \$2,475 for his life. His pay is \$2,315. A captain's commission and outfit cost \$19,500, which would purchase an annuity of \$1,046, while his pay is \$1,135. In other cavalry regiments, a lieutenant-colonel's commission and outfit cost \$32,875, which would buy an annuity of \$2,100, and his pay is but \$1,725. In the Foot Guards a commission and outfit for the same grade cost \$46,000, and is equivalent to an annuity of \$3,000, and the pay is \$2,440. These are said to be fair examples of the operations of the system in all arms of the service. The sum total of the annuities which might be purchased by the amount given for the commissions and outfits of eight officers of various grades and ages, indiscriminately taken, is stated to be \$12,800, while the amount of their pay is only \$12,300.

The extent to which this singular custom prevails in the British army, has been lately the subject of much discussion in Parliament and elsewhere. The system is simply this: In time of peace officers are said *generally* to purchase their original commissions. Sometimes they are given to sons of old officers, or to non-commissioned officers for meritorious service. Once in the army, the officer rises by seniority to the head of his class; and when a vacancy occurs in the next grade by death, the senior of the class is regularly promoted; but if the vacancy occur by the retirement of an officer, then the appointment is offered to the senior of the class next below at a price fixed by the army regulations. If he cannot or will not buy, the offer descends until a purchaser is found, and the buyer is at once lifted over the heads of his seniors into the vacancy. This plan prevails in the appointments to all grades up to, and including, that of lieutenant-colonel's; subsequent grades are not purchased.

It is easy to perceive that in peace most commissions must be obtained by purchase, because the holders of them will generally take care to sell before the ordinary laws of life warn them of its approaching close, by which the value of their places will be lost to their family and heirs. Reversing the rule deprecated by Jefferson, few die, but all resign or retire. In war it is different; battle and disease make vacancies, and so present opportunities for gaining promotion by seniority. It is stated that in 1853, out of 30 Lieutenant-Colonels 13 were promoted without purchase; of 51 Majors, 22; of 266 Captains, 120. In 1854, after the war began, of 795 original commissions granted, only 358, less than half, were purchased.

The enormous money cost of abolishing the practice of selling commissions is indicated by the following return lately made public:

216 commissions of Lt. Colonel, valued at	£1,028,025
261 " Major, "	917,225
1663 " Captain, "	3,669,300
2320 " Lieutenant, "	1,891,995
993 " Ensign & cornet, "	561,090
<hr/> 5553	<hr/> £8,068,535

There is thus an implied property in military commissions valued at about \$40,000,000, which, though based upon a most pernicious regulation, the Government must purchase before they can correct the abuse of which it is the cause.

The reviewer, in stating the arguments for the continuance of the system, assumes that, because the holders of the purchased commissions receive in pay less than the current interest upon the cost of them, the services of such officers are rendered to the government gratuitously. This is a manifest mistake. The cost of the officer's service to the public treasury is exactly the same as if he had paid nothing for his commission. He pays nothing *to the government*; and although it is true that all the pay to the holder of the commission merely passes through his hands into those of a third person, that pay is no less a charge upon the public, and it goes in the shape of an actual pension to the retiring officer. And this fact leads us to the great and irremovable objection to the purchase system. It converts the actual holder of the commission, the officer for the time being, into a mere pensioner in expectancy. He enters upon his grade as a commission broker; he holds it as tenant for his successor; and he resigns the tenement as soon as he can find one to take it off his hands, at an advance upon his investment. He considers, with much appearance of justice, that the government has no right to impose upon him hard and difficult services for which he can receive nothing. Particularly, he imagines himself rightfully exempt from distant service in war, wherein if he lose his life, that loss is also the annihilation of his property.

One obvious effect of such a system is, to introduce into the army a trading and huckstering spirit which must, in no long course of time, supplant sentiments of chivalrous devotion to country, patriotism, and the *prestige* of arms. Its tendency is to make the officer a popinjay in scarlet plumage, a fashionable loungeur, who declines in due course into the insipid habitue of the club-room, the gourmande, the wine-bibber, and the card-player. It is hard on the poor officer who cannot buy his way up. It is, indeed, about as well adapted to enervate the military character of a nation by corrupting and enfeebling its army, as could well be devised. Its inevitable results are indifference and inefficiency in the officers, and contempt and disobedience on the part of the men.

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OUR OWN WAR EXPENSES.

FROM the general appropriations recently made by our Congress, amounting in all to \$63,604,023, we cull the following sums for our current war expenses, viz :

FOR THE ARMY AND ITS ACCOMPANIMENTS :

Army proper.....	\$10,586,249
Armories, arsenals and munitions of war.....	985,049
Military academy.....	173,894
Fortifications and other works of defence.....	1,745,300
Surveys, &c.....	135,000
Miscellaneous objects.....	1,400,060
Arrearages.....	2,000
Compensation of the Secretary of War, clerks and employees.....	106,300
Contingent expenses of the War Department...	29,160

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\$15,162,952